

'MICROFILMED

*OSR file*

## CIA Operations Center

**Subject** Middle East

**Date** March 16, 1978

**Analyst/SDO**

**Distribution**



# White House Spot Report

OC - WHSR - 78 - 052

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**DATE TIME SOURCE**

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TO: IMMEDIATE WHITE HOUSE//SITUATION ROOM. 4

DATE: 16 MARCH 1978

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST: THE POLITICAL FALLOUT OF THE ISREALI  
INCURSION

THE INCURSION HAS PREDICTABLY WON THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT  
OF THE ISRAELI PUBLIC AND PRESS.

A MOOD APPROACHING WAR FEVER HAD DEVELOPED IN ISRAEL PRIOR TO THE OPERATION AND HAS BEEN FOLLOWED BY A CATHARTIC SENSE OF RELIEF AND PRIDE. THE OPPOSITION LABOR PARTY HAS RALLIED FIRMLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON, A PROMINENT LABOR PARTY LEADER, HAS ENDORSED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO KEEP FORCES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON UNTIL AN AGREEMENT IS WORKED OUT THAT BARS THE RETURN OF THE PALESTINIAN GUERRILLAS.

THE GOVERNMENT STILL FACES [REDACTED] QUESTIONS  
OVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE TERRORIST RAID. RUMORS  
HAVE ALREADY APPEARED IN THE ISRAELI PRESS SUGGESTING THAT THERE  
WAS A SECURITY LAPSE. [REDACTED]

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Approved for Release: 2013/10/21



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STANDING BY IDLY. SYRIA WILL TRY TO FEND OFF SUCH CHARGES BY ACCUSING EGYPT OF ACQUIESCING IN ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF SOUTH LEBANON BUT THE PRESSURE WILL MOUNT ON ASAD TO DO SOMETHING. SYRIA'S PUBLIC PROMISE TO PROVIDE AIR COVER FOR LEBANON REFLECTS ASAD'S RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE SYRIAN RESOLVE. ASAD WILL PROBABLY ENCOURAGE THE PALESTINIANS, ESPECIALLY SYRIAN CONTROLLED SAIRA FORCES, TO HOLD THEIR POSITIONS BETWEEN THE SYRIAN FORCES IN CENTRAL LEBANON AND THE ISRAELIS. 4

SO FAR, [REDACTED] ASAD WANTS TO AVOID A DIRECT MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. SYRIAN FORCES IN LEBANON HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO FIRE ONLY IN SELF DEFENSE, AND SYRIAN AIRCRAFT HAVE AVOIDED ENTERING LEBANESE AIRSPACE. 4

SYRIA'S DEMARCHE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFLECTS ASAD'S DESIRE TO SOLIDIFY INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION TO AN ISRAELI-OCCUPIED BUFFER ZONE. THE SYRIANS ARE AWARE THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY IS COMPLETELY INCAPABLE OF ASSUMING A SECURITY ROLE IN THE SOUTH AND THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL NOT WITHDRAW UNLESS THE PALESTINIANS ARE KEPT AWAY FROM THE BORDER. 4

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IN THE PAST THE SYRIANS HAVE RESISTED EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN SOUTH LEBANON, BELIEVING THAT THIS WOULD INFRINGE ON THEIR PREEMINENT POSITION IN LEBANON. ENDORSING SUCH A FORCE MIGHT ALSO HAVE PROMPTED CHARGES THAT SYRIA ABANDONED THE PALESTINIANS' LAST "FRONT" AGAINST ISRAEL. NONETHELESS ASAD WOULD PROBABLY NOW FIND A UN FORCE MORE PALATABLE THAN A CONTINUED ISRAELI PRESENCE. WITHOUT PUBLICLY ENDORSING SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT HE MAY TACITLY ENCOURAGE THE LEBANESE TO PURSUE IT. 4

EGYPT PRESIDENT SADAT YESTERDAY JOINED OTHER ARAB LEADERS IN CONDEMNING ISRAELI'S ATTACK INTO LEBANON. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ISRAEL'S SECURITY GOALS CAN BE MET ONLY BY SOLVING THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, NOT BY FORCE OF ARMS. SADAT VOWED TO CONTINUE HIS SEARCH FOR PEACE. 4

OTHER EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA YESTERDAY SHARPLY CRITICIZED ISRAEL'S "GENOCIDE" IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE SCALE OF ITS REPRISAL. ISRAEL, NEVERTHELESS, IS STILL TREATED AS A POTENTIAL PARTNER IN SHAPING PEACE. 4

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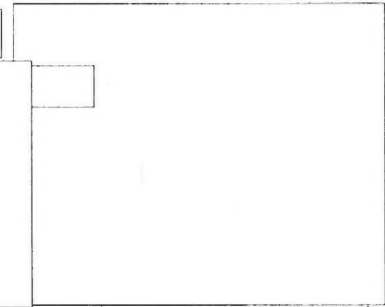
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ISRAEL'S RAID WAS USED AS AN OCCASION TO ATTACK<sup>K</sup> THE USSR  
 AND SYRIA WHICH WERE RIDUCULED FOR THE CRAVEN REACTION. THE  
 US RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION PENDING A US OFFICIAL STATEMENT.  
 EGYPT CLEARLY EXPECTS THE US TO CONDEMN THE ISRAELI ACTION AND  
 TO LEAD DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO SECURE ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM  
 LEBANON. PREPARED BY:



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